

CLEAN ENERGY INFRASTRUCTURE DASHBOARD STAFF STRAW PROPOSAL

I. INTRODUCTION

The Energy Facilities Siting Board (or “Siting Board”) staff request comments on the content and format of a Clean Energy Infrastructure Dashboard (“Dashboard”) required by “An Act promoting a clean energy grid, advancing equity and protecting ratepayers” (the “2024 Climate Act”). The 2024 Climate Act charges the Siting Board with issuing a single consolidated permit for clean energy infrastructure facilities, accelerating the deployment of clean energy infrastructure, and ensuring benefits of the clean energy transition are shared equitably in the Commonwealth. The Siting Board anticipates a substantial increase in applications for clean energy facilities. To provide transparency and accountability regarding the Siting Board’s progress in reviewing clean energy infrastructure applications, the Act requires that the Siting Board create the Dashboard in cooperation with the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (“EEA”).¹ The 2024 Climate Act also requires the Department of Energy Resources (“DOER”) to determine on a quarterly basis whether more than 50 percent of applications for small clean energy infrastructure facilities in the preceding 24-month period have been constructively approved.²

The 2024 Climate Act requires that the Siting Board convene a “stakeholder process” to develop and inform the design and content of the Dashboard. This request for comment seeks to obtain such input from stakeholders.

¹ Section 11 of the 2024 Climate Act states that the Dashboard will be funded by assessments on electric companies in the Commonwealth
<https://malegislature.gov/Laws/SessionLaws/Acts/2024/Chapter239>.

² The 2024 Climate Act requires DOER to develop standards and guidelines for small clean energy infrastructure facilities, and the Siting Board to set standards for and review large clean energy infrastructure facilities. Under the 2024 Climate Act, if the Siting Board does not issue a decision within a set time, the application will be approved by constructive approval and a consolidated permit will be issued. G.L. c. 164, § 69T(b). Similarly, if a municipality is unable to issue a decision within twelve months, the applicant will receive a consolidated local permit by constructive approval. G.L. c. 25A, § 21(d). DOER staff have indicated that to determine the percentage of constructive approvals, DOER would be required to track the filings in a similar process to the Siting Board in its Dashboard.

II. CONTEXT FOR STRAW PROPOSAL

The purpose of the Dashboard requirement is to increase transparency of Siting Board review of clean energy infrastructure facilities. Section 8 of the 2024 Climate Act provides minimum requirements for the Dashboard (emphasis added):³

Chapter 25 of the General Laws is hereby amended by striking out section 12N, as so appearing, and inserting in place thereof the following section:-

The division shall maintain a **real-time**, online, clean energy infrastructure dashboard. The division shall, in cooperation with the executive office of energy and environmental affairs and its affiliated departments and offices, create, maintain and update the dashboard by collecting, facilitating the collection and reporting of comprehensive data and information related to: (i) accelerating the responsible deployment of clean energy infrastructure through siting and permitting reform in a manner consistent with applicable legal requirements, including, but not limited to, the greenhouse gas emissions limits and sublimits set under chapter 21N; (ii) facilitating community input into the siting and permitting of clean energy infrastructure; and (iii) ensuring that the benefits of clean energy deployment are shared equitably among all residents of the commonwealth. The dashboard shall, at a minimum, report for **the most recent reporting period and in the aggregate the number of applications filed, decided or pending information**, including, but not limited to: (i) **the number of applications deemed incomplete** and the **number of applications constructively approved**; (ii) the **average duration of application review**; and (iii) **average staffing levels delineated by job classification**. The dashboard shall make use of **bar charts, line charts and other visual representations to facilitate public understanding of both recent performance and long-term and cumulative trends and outcomes** of clean energy deployment. **The division shall convene a stakeholder process to develop and inform the design and content of the dashboard**; provided, however, that comprehensive data and information shall be made publicly available in a machine-readable format.

Currently, the Siting Board provides the public with several methods to track project review. Current Siting Board reviews are visible to the public on its website on dedicated project websites and on the Open Dockets page.⁴ In addition, the public may view all documents filed per docket in the Department of Public Utilities (“DPU”) [electronic file room](#).

By establishing a Dashboard requirement, the 2024 Climate Act envisions a more sophisticated and transparent way for the public to view the progress of project review at the

³ The section implementing the Dashboard goes into effect February 18, 2025, but the provisions relating to consolidated permits do not go into effect until March 1, 2026. Therefore, Siting Board have developed an interim Dashboard available as of February 18, 2025. See <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/efsb-permitting-dashboard>.

⁴ <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/efsb-and-dpu-siting-open-dockets>.

Siting Board. There are several permitting dashboard examples, or similar tools, that are employed by other permitting agencies. Examples include the DPU [Pipeline Safety Division](#), [U.S. EPA](#), [City of Boston Planning Department](#), and federal [Permitting Council](#). Other permitting dashboards vary in level of detail and scope of tracking (e.g., project specific milestones versus the “bird’s eye view” required of the new Siting Board Dashboard).

As referenced above, DOER staff have expressed that it will need to track the review of small clean energy infrastructure facilities in implementing DOER’s responsibilities under the 2024 Climate Act. Siting Board staff expects to work with DOER in developing the Dashboard. Siting Board staff and EEA are also discussing the need/feasibility of engaging a consultant(s) or the in-house information technology experts at EEA to design the final Dashboard.⁵ The final Dashboard should be easy to read, updated to ensure accuracy, require minimal manual input of data by staff, and meet the requirements of the 2024 Climate Act.

III. MAJOR QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS STRAW PROPOSAL

As prescribed by the 2024 Climate Act, the Dashboard will have the following features and metrics, for the most recent reporting period and in the aggregate number of applications filed, decided or pending:

- Number of applications deemed incomplete;
- Number of applications constructively approved;
- Average duration of application review;^
- Average staffing levels delineated by job classification;^
- Bar charts, line charts, and other visual representations to facilitate public understanding of both recent performance and long-term and cumulative trends and outcomes; and
- Design and content of the dashboard informed by a stakeholder process.

As referenced above, Siting Board staff will create a temporary Dashboard as required by the implementation timeline described in the Act. The interim Dashboard will track projects filed with the Siting Board after the effective date of the 2024 Climate Act. The symbol “^” denotes metrics that are currently available and will be displayed on the initial version of the Dashboard (i.e., before completeness determinations and constructive approvals become part of the Siting Board review process). The Siting Board staff welcomes stakeholder input on all aspects of the Dashboard, which it will consider in developing the final Dashboard.

⁵ An additional tool that the Siting Board is considering is a new energy facility siting filing portal that could efficiently handle the anticipated increase in Siting Board applications and provide a user-friendly interface for the public. Siting Board staff recommends considering the feasibility of merging this new portal with the Dashboard as an additional output feature.

IV. REQUEST FOR COMMENTS

The Siting Board welcomes comments on any or all of the contents of the staff straw proposal above, as well as any or all of the questions below:

1. The legislative language requires the Dashboard provided information for the “most recent reporting period.” What could this reporting period be?
 - What specific design features should the Dashboard have?
2. What specific additional content could the Siting Board consider for the Dashboard?
3. What are examples of Dashboards that the Siting Board and its consultant should consider?
 - Other states use interactive maps to display the location of energy projects under review. What concerns, if any (e.g., critical energy infrastructure information (“CEII”), confidential/competitive business interests), do agencies, developers or distribution companies have about displaying spatial data of proposed projects on an interactive dashboard?